

**Written Testimony from JoAnne Bauer**

**In Support of Raised Bill H.B. 6519, An Act**

**Concerning The Labeling Of Genetically Engineered Food**

Whole Foods Market announced last week that it will require labels on all products containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) but not until 2018! While it is a victory for the grassroots movement against GMOs for a major retailer like Whole Foods to take this stand — since the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) seems to have sided with big business in allowing GMO foods to be sold without any labeling whatsoever — it merely underscores how essential the local state initiatives are in the march toward nationwide GMO labeling and hopefully, the eventual ban of GMOs entirely. Many countries around the world, about 65, have banned or severely restricted the use of GMOs in their food supplies, while the U.S. stands almost alone in treating foods containing GMOs virtually the same as non-GMO foods. As such, the U.S. is the biggest consumer of GMO foods worldwide, and big business has been reaping in profits at the expense of its citizens -- us.

In light of this exciting news, I thought it might be a good time to review what GMOs are — and why getting labels on them is so important. It's important to educate yourself now, because the onslaught of approved GMO foods entering our food supply is likely to continue, as the government refuses to acknowledge that they could be harmful.

**Why do GMOs exist?** Our government and the Big Agra companies it supports work constantly to convince us that GMO foods are perfectly safe, and that their benefits include lower cost crops, more productive farms, and even healthier foods. But the real truth is, genetically engineered plants exist for only one single reason -- profits. Companies like Monsanto have been known to bully and sue farmers into paying "technology fees" to use their GMO seeds. In most cases, the reason that seeds are genetically modified is so they plants can withstand massive doses of herbicides and pesticides. And guess who sells these toxic chemicals? The same companies that make the GMO seeds.

**Why should you be VERY concerned about GMOs in our food supply?** Genetically engineered plants have had either genes from bacteria or viruses, or genes that make plants resistant to toxic chemicals like the herbicide Roundup — spliced into their DNA. These genes were never part of the human diet until the first GMO plant was created in 1996.

To date, there has been no long-term human safety research conducted on GMOs. To assume that they are safe defies common sense, as we lack any scientific evidence to prove that they do not pose a threat to human health. In fact, more research points towards potentially harmful effects of consuming GMOs.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM)'s official position on GMOs is that they "have not been properly tested and pose a serious health risk" and that a moratorium on GMO foods should be put in place until long-term studies demonstrate their safety. Many other environmental, public health and consumer protection organizations around the world are also calling for these steps to be taken.

According to the AAEM, "Animal studies indicate serious health risks associated with GM food," including reproductive problems, compromised immunity, accelerated aging, blood sugar imbalances and harm to major organs.

Big Agra insists that GMO foods are perfectly safe. Yet there is undeniable scientific evidence that proves the contrary — GMOs pose a grave threat to human health.

**Here are examples of devastating research results:**

- **GMOs causing organ disruption:** A review of 19 studies concluded that consuming GMO corn or soybeans leads to significant organ disruptions in rats and mice, particularly in livers and kidneys. The researchers who conducted the review stated that the GMO soybean and corn varieties used in the studies "constitute 83% of the commercialized GMOs" that Americans currently consume."
- **GMOs promoting cancer and early death:** Last fall, a French research team published a study in a peer-reviewed journal showing that rats exposed to low doses of both GMO corn and the widely used herbicide Roundup developed horrifying mammary tumors and widespread organ damage. The researchers said that 50% of males and 70% of females died prematurely, compared with only 30% and 20% in the control group.
- **Insecticide chemicals ending up in our blood:** A study published in Reproductive Toxicology detected a GMO insecticide chemical, known as Bt toxin, in human blood, offering proof that its widespread use is a major public health concern. Upon taking blood samples, researchers detected the Bt toxin in a shocking 93% of pregnant women, 80% of fetuses and 69% of non-pregnant women. The fact that Bt toxin was detected even in unborn babies shows that the chemical persists far longer than the biotechnology industry claims it does.
- **GMOs altering digestive tracts:** A shocking study showed that genetically modified plant DNA leads to the development of "GMO" microorganisms, which reproduce continuously inside the human body. These microorganisms actually become part of the bacteria in our digestive tracts and reproduce continuously inside us — even after we stop eating GMO foods. No one knows what the implications of having genetically engineered genes permanently living inside our guts may be.
- **GMOs may contribute to obesity:** Research from Norway suggests that eating GMO corn and corn-based products, as well as meat from animals that are fed GMO grain, will cause you to weight gain faster and retain the weight. The study also linked GMO consumption to significant

changes in the intestinal tract, kidney and liver, as well as pancreas, genitals and the immune system.

These studies are certainly cause for immediate concern.

**GMOs threaten traditional farming.** Aside from the potential dangers of consuming GMO foods, GMOs pose a grave threat to the entire organic farming industry. (Scientists say that cross-contamination of GMO crops with non-GMO crops will be inevitable.) GMOs also contribute to greater pollution because many are designed to withstand greater application of pesticides and herbicides. Experts all over the world are warning that as more and more GMOs are approved, they could become so intertwined with our food supply that we reach a point of no return.

**Ask yourself:** If the USDA and the Big Agra companies are so sure that GMOs are completely safe, why do they vigorously lobby against any efforts to label foods containing GMOs? And to do the research? Clearly, if their GMOs were so amazing for solving food problems, wouldn't they want to flaunt it, rather than hide it? I think they surely would, unless they have something to hide, and are concerned about liability.

(Details provided from recent articles.)